



# Statements and Speeches

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No. 75/40

## CANADA'S DEFENCE PRIORITIES

A Statement in the House of Commons on November 27, 1975, by the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable James Richardson.

Decisions of far-reaching importance for the future of the Canadian Armed Forces have been made by the Government, and I wish at this time to inform the House of the conclusions the Government has reached at this stage of the defence structure review.

The Government has confirmed the four priority roles of the Department of National Defence, which are: first of all, a commitment to the defence, security and sovereignty of Canada; secondly, a commitment to the defence of North America; thirdly, a commitment to collective security within the NATO alliance; and, fourthly, a commitment to our country's unique and important contribution to international peace-keeping.

The conclusions of the defence structure review confirm that Canada will continue to have a combined regular and reserve force of more than 100,000 personnel, made up of 78,000 regular personnel and 22,000 reserve personnel. This combined regular and reserve force of 100,000 will ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces will continue to be able to protect Canadian sovereignty, to contribute to national security, and to provide timely reaction to any civil emergency tasks to which only the forces can respond.

The Government recognizes that substantial modernization and replacement of major items of military equipment must be started immediately in order to ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces maintain their capability to carry out effectively their four priority roles.

Other major decisions that I wish to announce are: First, Canada will continue to maintain in Europe a land force and an air force designed and equipped to contribute a strong combat capability to NATO's collective defence of the central region. Second, modern and effective main-battle tanks will be provided, either by "retrofit" or acquisition of new tanks, in order to ensure that our army contingent in Europe possesses the necessary up-to-date equipment to fulfil its assigned tasks beside our NATO partners. Negotiations for the acquisition of new tanks, or the complete modernization of our present tank force, are to be initiated immediately.

Third, to replace our *Argus* aircraft, the Government has decided to

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purchase a fleet of 18 *Lockheed* P3 long-range patrol aircraft, at a cost of \$642 million in 1975 dollars. Other related costs, including spare parts, ground data centres, federal sales tax, contingencies and an allowance for inflation between now and final delivery, will bring the total expenditure to approximately \$950 million. Some additional costs may be encountered in order to accommodate the payments on this program within the capital-growth provisions to which I will refer later. The new aircraft will be designed primarily to carry out military tasks essential to North America and NATO defence, as well as providing us with a much-improved capability to carry out the long-range surveillance needed to protect our growing sovereignty interests in the waters off our coasts and in the Arctic.

Fourth, the air-combat capability of the air-force squadrons in Europe is to be maintained at its present level. Air-defence forces in Canada are to be maintained at a level of capability to meet sovereignty requirements for identification and control of intrusions into Canadian air-space.

Fifth, the structure of the Canadian Armed Forces will provide for up to 2,000 personnel to be available for United Nations peacekeeping purposes at any one time.

These decisions cover those matters of the defence structure review concerning the posture and equipping of the Canadian Armed Forces on which immediate action will be taken. The review will continue on questions concerning the replacement of fighter aircraft and ships.

Particularly significant to the future of national defence is the fact that the Government has recognized the need to compensate for inflation in the Department's personnel, operations and maintenance budgets for next year and in subsequent years.

To conform with the Government's policy of economic restraint, the Department of National Defence will find from within its currently-planned budget the funds required next year for the start of the tank and the long-range patrol aircraft programs. In the following years, the Government has agreed that capital expenditures for defence are to be increased, in real terms, by 12 per cent each year for the next five years, until capital expenditures reach at least 20 per cent of the total defence budget.

As part of the defence structure review, there has been an assessment of the infrastructure required to support the operational components of the forces. Infrastructure includes headquarters, bases, training and educational facilities and logistics. In aggregate, this infrastructure support requires a large part of the total

personnel and financial commitment of the defence program. Over the years, there has been some consolidation in these areas, but I believe that our present infrastructure is still larger than is needed to support our operational forces, and for that reason some further consolidation of these support facilities could achieve cost savings without impairing our operational capability. For that reason, I intend to make recommendations to Cabinet within the next few months concerning a better balance of support capability to operational capability, which will increase proportionately our combat capability relative to our infrastructure and support facilities.

I believe honourable members will agree that these decisions are of far-reaching significance for the Canadian Armed Forces and for Canada and, in fact, for the NATO alliance. Our national commitment to the protection of Canadian sovereignty and to the preservation of freedom has been reinforced once again by the decisions taken by the Canadian Government. There is every reason to believe that these decisions will boost the morale of the Canadian Armed Forces and will increase still further the pride Canadians have in the dedicated and capable men and women who serve Canada in our Armed Forces.

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